

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-07 /078 W
-----231832Z 009338 /43

R 231803Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8470
INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION GENEVA
USMISSION NATO
USMISSION USBERLIN
AMCONSUL BREMEN
AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF
AMCONSUL FRANKFURT
AMCONSUL HAMBURG
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMCONSUL STUTTGART

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 08774

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, GW
SUBJECT: NEW TENSIONS IN THE CDU/CSU CAMP

SUMMARY: INTERNAL CDU WRANGLING, AND A CSU RESURRECTION
OF THE FOURTH-PARTY IDEA, HAVE BESET THE UNION IN THE
PAST FEW DAYS. THEY REFLECT PENT-UP OPPOSITION
FRUSTRATION OVER THE STALEMATE IN BONN, AND THE (SO
FAR) UNPRODUCTIVE LEADERSHIP OF HELMUT
KOHL. END SUMMARY.
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1. IN THE PAST WEEK, THE CDU/CSU CAMP HAS PUBLICLY
OPENED OLD WOUNDS IN ITS RANKS. THE ISSUE IS WHAT COURSE
THE OPPOSITION MUST FOLLOW IN ORDER TO REGAIN POWER IN
BONN, AND HOW TO TREAT THE FDP.

2. ON MAY 17, CDU BUNDESTAG DEPUTY TODENHOEFER

(RHINELAND-PALATINATE) PUBLICLY CRITICIZED THE "DESOLATE" SITUATION IN HIS PARTY, AND ITS "FLABBY" POSTURE TOWARD THE FDP. TODENHOEFER ARGUED THAT THE UNION SHOULD ATTACK BOTH COALITION PARTIES AS CORE-SPONSIBLE FOR THE FRG'S PROBLEMS. TODENHOEFER REPEATED THESE REMARKS SEVERAL TIMES IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS, CLAIMING THAT THE CDU GRASS-ROOTS AGREES WITH HIM. HE TRIED, WITH LITTLE SUCCESS, TO EXEMPT HELMUT KOHL FROM HIS CRITIQUE: "I'M NOT OPPOSING KOHL, BUT I WANT KOHL FINALLY TO MAKE (POLITICAL) OPPOSITION."

3. PUBLIC REACTION FROM THE CDU CAMP WAS QUICK TO CRITICIZE WHAT TODENHOEFER HAD SAID, ESPECIALLY HIS CHOICE OF A PUBLIC FORUM. PARTY WHIP HENNINGER, AND LAND CHIEFTAINS STOLTENBERG (SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN) AND VOGEL (RHINELAND-PALATINATE) EXPRESSED THEIR UNHAPPINESS. THE CDU LEADERSHIP WILL DISCUSS TODENHOEFER'S REMARKS AT ITS REGULAR MEETING ON MAY 24. (IT IS KNOWN THAT A LARGE GROUP OF UNION POLITICIANS AGREE WITH TODENHOEFER, BUT WOULD PREFER TO DEBATE THE ISSUE PRIVATELY.)

4. BEFORE THE TODENHOEFER STORM HAD SUBSIDED, THE CSU BEGAN A RERUN OF ITS KREUTH FEUD WITH THE CDU. IN A DER SPIEGEL INTERVIEW RELEASED OVER THE WEEKEND, THE LEADER OF THE CSU GROUP IN THE BUNDESTAG (ZIMMERMANN) RESURRECTED THE "FOURTH PARTY" IDEA. HE CALLED IT A VALID CONCEPT WHICH KOHL IS CONSIDERING AND WHICH THE JOINT CDU/CSU STRATEGY COMMISSION WILL DISCUSS, PARTICULARLY IN LIGHT OF WHAT HAPPENS IN THE FOUR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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STATE ELECTIONS NEXT YEAR. ASKED WHETHER KOHL WILL LEAD THE UNION TICKET IN 1980, ZIMMERMANN BLUNTLY SAID THAT "NO ONE IS AUTOMATICALLY ANYTHING."

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5. ZIMMERMANN'S INTERVIEW BROUGHT A QUICK REPLY FROM
HEINRICH GEISSLER, CDU SECRETARY GENERAL AND A LOYAL
KOHL MAN. GEISSLER CONFIRMED THAT THE CDU, WHILE
WILLING TO DISCUSS THE IDEA OF A FOURTH PARTY, BELIEVES
THAT SUCH A GROUP WOULD BE NARROWLY BASED AND LACK THE
BREADTH OF A TRUE "PEOPLE'S PARTY." MOREOVER, GEISSLER
OPINED THAT THE UNION BELIEVES IT CAN ATTAIN CONTROL
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IN BONN WITHOUT A FOURTH PARTY. IN THIS CONNECTION, HE
PRAISED THE "MODELS" OF THE CDU/FDP COALITIONS IN LOWER
SAXONY AND THE SAARLAND. GEISSLER EXPLICITLY RULED OUT
ANY DIRECT COMPETITION BETWEEN THE CDU AND THE CSU,
EITHER NATIONALLY OR IN BAVARIA. HE CONFIRMED THAT
THE JOINT CDU/CSU STRATEGY COMMISSION WILL MEET IN JUNE.

6. THE ABOVE SUGGESTS THAT THE CDU'S INTRAMURAL
SQUABBLE, AND ITS TENSIONS WITH THE CSU OVER THE
STRATEGY COMMISSION AND THE FOURTH PARTY, WILL CONTINUE
TO PLAGUE HELMUT KOHL IN THE MONTHS AHEAD. TODENHOEFER
HAS HEADLINE-GRABBING INSTINCTS AND ENJOYS NO BROAD
SUPPORT IN HIS PARTY, BUT HIS CRITICISM HIT A NERVE IN

FOCUSSING UNHAPPINESS OVER KOHL'S LEADERSHIP, HIS
Coddling of the FDP to date, and his inability so far to
achieve clear advantages to the Union in Bonn even
as the government coalition has floundered.
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Message Attributes

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